

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SOFIA 00669 01 OF 02 121059Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CCO-00 /026 W
-----096267 121113Z /20

R 120945Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4400
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SOFIA 0669
EXDIS

FOR DAS LUERS FROM THE AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: BU, US, RO, XH
SUBJECT: CEAUSECU FROM A SOFIA PERSPECTIVE

REF: A) BUCHAREST 1993) STATE 087032; C) BUDAPEST 1483

1. WE WELCOME THE OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON BUCHAREST'S
THOUGHTFUL AND THOUGHT-PROVOKING ASSESSMENT OF FUTURE US
PROSPECTS IN THE BALKANS.

2. FROM SOFIA, CEAUSESCU IS FAR FROM BEING PERCEIVED AS A
SUCCESSOR TO TITO -- EITHER UNFAVORABLE, AS A THREAT TO WARSAW
PACT/CEMA UNITY BY MORE SOVIET-ORIENTED PARTY AND GOVERNMENT
LEADERS, OR MORE FAVORABLY, AS AN EXAMPLE OF AN EFFECTIVE
BREAKAWAY, BY THOSE WHO WOULD FAVOR BULGARIAN POLICIES MORE
INDEPENDENT OF SOVIET DIRECTION. IN SOFIA, THERE IS A
CLEAR DIFFERENCE IN PERCEPTION BETWEEN TITO'S 1948 BREAK,
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WHICH BULGARIA REMEMBERS POIGNANTLY, AND CEAUSESCU'S
GRADUAL EDGING INTO AN INDEPENDENT FOREIGN POLICY. TITO'S
BREAK LED TO AN UPHEAVAL IN INTRA-BCP POLITICS AND SET THE
LINE, BY CONTRAST, OF CLOSE ADHERENCE TO SOVIET DIRECTIVES
FOLLOWED BY BULGARIAN LEADERS EVER SINCE. THE ONLY
EFFECTS THAT ROMANIA'S ABERRATION HAS HAD ON BULGARIAN
ACTIONS IS THE NECESSITY IT BRINGS ABOUT FOR WRANGLING

OVER LANGUAGE OF JOINT COMMUNIQUE, THE REQUIREMENT FOR BULGARIA TO JOIN WITH THE GDR AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA IN TRYING TO MUSCLE THE ROMANIANS IN INTERPARTY FORUMS, AND SOME FUZZINESS OVER ADVANCE JOINT PLANNING IN CEMA AND THE WARSAW PACT TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT ROMANIAN SENSIBILITIES. BULGARIANS GRUDINGLY ACKNOWLEDGE TITO'S STATURE AS A PARTISAN (ALTHOUGH SUBSEQUENTLY GONE ASTRAY) AND RECOVIZ, WITH REGRET IN RELATION TO THE MACEDONIAN QUESTION, THAT HIS PUBLIC STATURE IN YUGOSLAVIA ITSELF IS IN PART A FUNCTION OF HIS ROLE AS UNIFYING SYMBOL IN AN ETHNICALLY DIVERSE FEDERATION. ADULATION OF CEAUSESCU IS SEEN AS A PERSONALITY CULT, MORE PRONOUNCED THAN ZHIVKOV'S OR PERHAPS EVEN BREZHNEV'S, AND SERVING LITTLE PURPOSE OTHER THAN SELF-UPLIFT.

3. IT DOES NOT SEEM TO US THAT CEAUSESCU COULD SERVE AS A GUIDE TO BULGARIA TOWARD A MORE INDEPENDENT POSTURE. IN GENERAL, BULGARIANS DO NOT ADMIRE ROMANIANS. IN PARTICULAR, THEY DO NOT SEE THAT CEAUSESCU'S INDEPENDENT FOREIGN POLICY HAS GAINED HIM MUCH OF SUBSTANCE, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF MFN FROM THE US, WHICH BULGARIA IS NOT YET WPLING TO ROCK THE BOAT WITH MOSCOW TO SEEK. BULGARIANS ARE UNIMPRESSED WITH THE STANDARD OF LIVING IN ROMANIA--PEOPLE DRIVE FROM BUCHAREST TO BULGARIA TO BUY PRODUCE--AND BULGARIAN CRITICS OF ZHIVKOV'S REGIME ON HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS GROUNDS SEE CEAUSESCU'S REGIME AS NO LESS CONFIDENTIAL

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RESTRICTIVE IN THAT DOMAIN.

4. WE SEE NO ONE AT THIS TIME LIKELY TO EMERGE AS A BALKAN REGIONAL LEADER. LEAVING ASIDE THE OBSERVATION THAT BALKAN UNITY MAY BE A CONTRADICITON IN TERMS, WE DO NOT SEE TITO AS A BALKAN REGIONAL LEADER. HE HAS EVERYONE'S RESPECT, BUT EVEN HE IS NOT ABLE TO BRING ABOUT REAL COOPERATION IN THE AREA WITH EACH COUNTRY MARCHING TO A DIFFERENT DRUM--ITS OWN, OR THE SOVIET UNION'S, OR WITH ONE EAR COCKED TMTHE EEC OR NATO AND US. ROMANIA MAY, IN FACT, BE THE BALKAN COUNTRY LEAST ABLE IN THE LONG RUN TO MOVE THE BALKANS TOWARD REGIONAL UNITY, PLACED AS IT IS, UNLIKE THE OTHERS, BETWEEN THE BALKANS AND A STILL THREATENING USSR.

5. WE CONCUR IN BUDAPEST'S OBSERVATION (PARA 3, REF C) THAT PRESENT US POLICY OF TREATING EACH EE COUNTRY AS AN ENTITY, WITH ITS OWN INTERESTS FOR OUR BILATERAL POLICIES TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT, REMAINS WISE. TO MAKE TOO MUCH OF CEAUSESCU OR TO SUGGEST HIM AND HIS COUNTRY AS A MODEL TO ENCOURAGE THE OTHERS WOULD BE TO SUGGEST THAT HIS ROUTE IS SOMEHOW PREFERABLE. THIS IS TOO LIMIT-

ING AN APPROACH TO TAKE TO EASTERN EUROPE, CONSIDERING
WHW EACH COUNTRY IS DOING IN ITS OWN WAY: ALBANIAN
ISOLATIONISM, POLISH INGENUITY, HUNGARIAN MATERIALISM,
CZECH INTELLECTUAL DEFIANCE, EAST GERMAN INDUSTriousNESS,
ROMANIAN INDEPENDENCE IN SOME AREAS OF FOREIGN POLICY,
AND BULGARIAN CONTENTMENT WITH BEING THE "LITTLE BROTHER"
TO BIG BROTHER IN MOSCOW. FOR US TO SEE ROMANIA OR
CEAUSESCU AS AN INTERLOCUTOR FOR THE US WITH EASTERN
EUROPE WOULD, WE AGAIN CONCUR WITH BUDAPEST, BE DAMAGING
TO OUR INTERESTS.

6. WE SHALL FOREGO HERE MORE THAN A PASSING REFERENCE
TO THE MACEDONIAN QUESTION; THAT REFERENCE IS PROMPTED
BY THE COMMENT ON YUGOSLAVIAN MOVES TO COUNTER WHAT IT
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SEES AS LGARIAN AGITATION STAGE-MANAGED BY THE SOVIETS
(PARA 16, REF A). WHILE WE CERTAINLY SEE MANY INDICATIONS
THAT SUCH IS A YUGOSLAV VIEW, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT IT
SHOULD BE TAKEN AS AN ACCURATE DESCRIPTION OF REALITY.
(WE DO NOT, OF COURSE, WISH TO IMPLY THAT THE REFTTEL
DOES SO.) BUT APART FROM DIFFERING JUDGMENTS IN THE
BALKANS OVER WHO IS DOING WHAT TO WHOM OVER THE MACEDONIAN

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AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SOFIA 0669

EXDIS

QUESTION, THE GENERAL ARGUMENT SUPPORTS THE EXISTENCE
OF A COMMON YUGOSLAV-ROMANIAN INTEREST, BUT BY THE
SAME TOKEN ARGUES AGAINST SEEING CEAUSESCU (OR TITO)
AS A POTENTIAL "REGIONAL LEADER IN THE BALKANS," OR
AS "A PARTNER FOR THE US... IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD"
AT LEAST NOT IN THE SENSE OF AN INTERLOCUTOR WITH --
OTHERS AND ABOVE ALL NOT WITH THE BULGARIANS.
GARTHOFF

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